COMMISSIONER SIMINGTON ADDRESSES NEW YORK STATE WIRELESS ASSOCIATION

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Hello, and thank you very much for inviting me to speak to such an esteemed group of innovators today. I am delighted to address the importance of fixed wireless in today's broadband economy. Fixed wireless is a technology that deserves more recognition for its value in bringing unserved and underserved communities Internet access across America, and for bringing more choices to consumers for broadband service at home and at work.

Fixed wireless growth is an enormous success story. And as I see it, one of the few obstacles to the continued growth of fixed wireless seems to be the evangelism about the supremacy of fiber that we've seen coming from both the fiber industry and administration policymakers. This perspective is unfortunate and misguided. I fully agree with the sentiments about the lack of technological neutrality in the NTIA's BEAD program, which as directed by Congress in the 2021 infrastructure bill, requires NTIA to allocate $42.45 billion to expand high-speed internet access in all 50 states and U.S. territories. The definitions adopted by NTIA stacked the deck in favor of fiber deployments—in places where fiber will likely take years to build-out, if it's even possible to do so.

I also think fiber evangelists refuse to give a fair shake to fixed wireless or to recognize its broad appeal to consumers. T-Mobile CEO Mike Sievert famously compared the company's fixed wireless service to a Toyota competing against the Ferrari-type speeds provided by fiber. He said, "it's kind of like the people at Ferrari pointing a finger at the world's best-selling car, Toyota, saying, we're faster, we're faster . . . but Toyota is the world's best-selling car . . . and is perfectly suited to what people want." It's a great analogy.

Everyone agrees that the technologies and services enabled by broadband access are crucial to full participation in today's economy. And while I think that fixed wireless technology can efficiently serve *all* communities, it is especially true for rural communities, because fixed wireless is high-speed, reliable, and can be deployed quickly and efficiently. As New York state knows all too well, rural America needs access to high-speed and reliable technologies today, not years from now, in order to remain competitive in our nation's economy. Despite the important role fixed wireless has played in achieving this goal, our policymakers have failed to realize the true potential of fixed wireless, and have in doing so, disadvantaged fixed wireless technology providers' ability to compete in the marketplace by gaining access to the funds available in government programs.

But this hasn't stopped you folks in the fixed wireless industry. This industry sector is scrappy and innovative and has been and continues to build-out broadband in hard to serve areas even without money from government subsidy programs. And don't just take it from me. Reams of press coverage have touted the explosive growth of fixed wireless innovation. In 2020, GM announced its new Factory Zero, the company's first all-electric vehicle assembly plant, which is also the first automotive plant in the U.S. to install dedicated 5G fixed wireless

technology provided by Verizon. And other large wireless carriers like T-Mobile have also grown their networks to cover large proportions of the population.

Samsung is also a major proponent of fixed wireless, providing the first end-to-end 5G fixed wireless commercial solution in 2018. The company has also worked with providers to improve 5G throughputs for fixed wireless over different mid-band and low-band spectrum. And the list goes on. I haven't even scratched the surface in giving kudos to the numerous WISPs who are out there innovating, including those serving hard to reach areas of New York state.

And we will certainly see more to come. Just this summer, Wells Fargo analysts predicted that fixed wireless will remain "the biggest disruptor" in the market for US broadband through next year, generally gobbling up 80-90% of industrywide net subscriber additions through 2024. The analysts also predicted that fixed wireless in general will capture around 12-13% of the overall US broadband market—and fully 10% of the residential broadband market—by 2025. That's incredible.

Now to get nerdy for just a moment: the fantastic work of fixed wireless carriers often gets swamped in policy circles that are fixated on line speed. Of course, all things being equal, more line speed is always good. But line speed alone cannot be taken as a reasonable proxy for consumer experience quality.

Wireless ISPs, to get to better quality of service, are prominent adopters of smart queue management, anti-bufferbloat, and sophisticated router firmware. These measures are not only inexpensive relative to the cost of infrastructure, but they allow for high-performance or even relatively basic equipment and facilities. I hope that the wireless ISP market influences the rest of the industry into taking a harder look at these questions. In the meantime, regulators should look beyond raw line speed in assessing ISP quality of service in order to avoid over-indexing on a single metric and to reward ISPs who think hard about how to best serve their customers.

And with that I'll stop talking. I'd like to give a heartfelt thanks to you all for letting me join you today—please enjoy the rest of the forum.